

How are the 2010 Census ZCTAs different from the Census 2000 ZCTAs?

Differences between Census 2000 ZCTAs and 2010 Census ZCTAs

Census 2000	2010 Census
ZCTA codes cover all land and water areas (represented with an 'XX' or 'HH' suffix)	ZCTA codes do not cover all land and water areas ('XX' and 'HH' suffixes were retired)
ZCTA codes covered the full extent of the nation 'wall-to-wall' coverage	ZCTA codes do not cover the full extent of the nation, 'holes' exist
ZCTA codes were published for both 5 digit and 3 digit ZCTAs	ZCTA codes were only published for 5 digit ZCTAs

Relationship of ZCTAs to other Geographic Entities

ZCTAs follow census block boundaries but are independent of all other statistical and governmental entities, therefore ZCTAs frequently cross the boundaries of other geographic boundaries. In addition, ZCTAs may occasionally cross state boundaries.

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TIGER/Line® is a registered trademark of the US Census Bureau
ZCTA™ is a trademark of the US Census Bureau

Locating ZCTA Data and Boundaries

ZCTA Relationship Files

The 2010 Census ZCTA relationship files provide simple relationships between the 2010 ZCTAs and other Census tabulation geography. They are available to download from the following webpage:

<http://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/relationship.html>

Shapefiles

Shapefiles are available from the TIGER/Line® Products webpage:

<http://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/tiger.html>

- TIGER/Line Shapefiles
- TIGER/Line files with Selected Demographic and Economic Data
- TIGER Geodatabases
- Cartographic Boundary Files
- KMLs - Cartographic Boundary Files

Demographic Data

The American FactFinder (AFF) is an online mapping and data dissemination tool that allows users to download demographic data tables by ZCTAs. In addition, users are able to create and print ZCTA maps.

<http://factfinder2.census.gov>

Questions
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ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs™)



U.S. Department of Commerce
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What are ZIP Code™ Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs™)?

First delineated for Census 2000, the 2010 Census ZIP Code tabulation areas (ZCTAs) are generalized areal representations of United States Postal Service (USPS) ZIP Codes. The Census Bureau collects ZIP Code data for housing units and many non-residential addresses from the USPS and from various field operations. Based on this ZIP Code data, the Census Bureau aggregates ZCTAs from addresses contained within each block. This aggregation of data allows a point-based data set (addresses) to be converted into an areal feature dataset (ZCTAs).

Find detailed information about 2010 Census ZCTAs at:

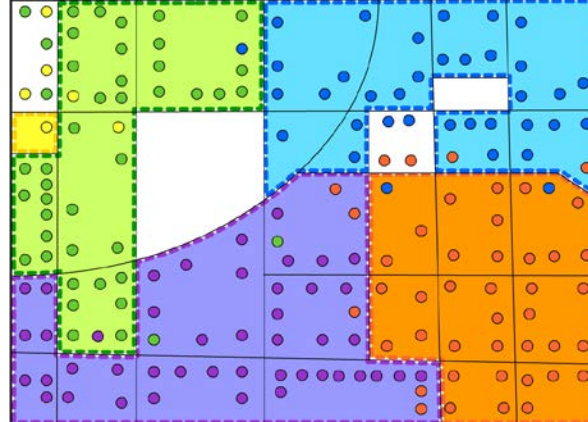
<http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/zctas.html>



How ZCTAs Were Created

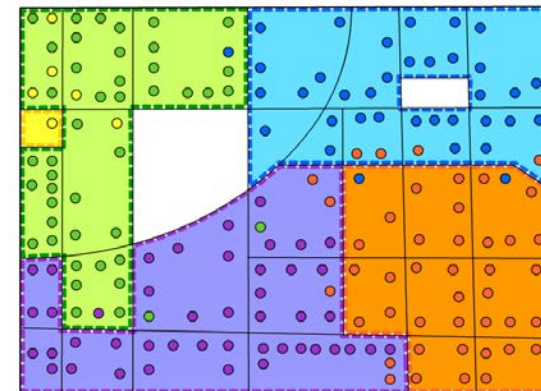
The Census Bureau first examined all of the addresses within each census block to define the list of ZIP Codes by block. Next, the most frequently occurring ZIP Code within each block was assigned to the entire census block as a preliminary ZCTA code. After all of the census blocks with addresses were assigned a preliminary ZCTA code, blocks were aggregated by code to create larger areas.

ZCTA Creation Steps



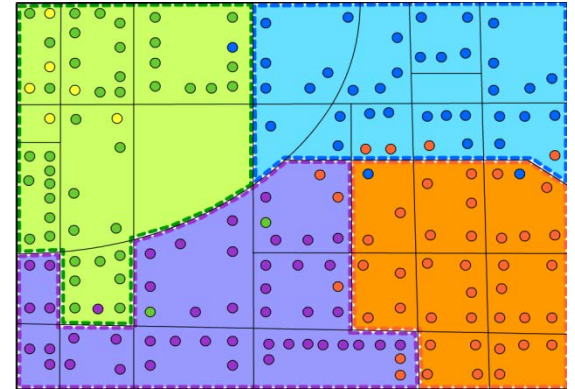
Each dot represents an address and each color represents a different ZIP Code.

The Census Bureau assigned blocks that contained addresses, but did not have a single most frequently occurring ZIP Code to the ZCTA with which the blocks had the longest shared boundary.



How ZCTAs Were Created, cont.

If the area of an unassigned enclave was less than two square miles, it was assigned to the surrounding ZCTA. The Census Bureau used block group boundaries to identify and group unassigned blocks. These unassigned blocks were merged into an adjacent ZCTA based on the length of shared boundary.



Completed ZCTAs

For the Census 2000 ZCTAs the Census Bureau created ZCTAs that ended in "XX" to represent large areas of land without ZIP Codes or "HH" to represent large areas of water without ZIP Codes. For the 2010 Census, large water bodies and large unpopulated land areas do not have ZCTAs.

ZCTAs were created using residential and nonresidential ZIP Codes that are available in the Census Bureau's MAF/TIGER database. ZIP Codes assigned to businesses only or single delivery point address will not necessarily appear as ZCTAs.